

**NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL  
PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES IN B.C.**

*Annual Report  
on Progress*

2008 - 2009



## **Introduction**

The Province of British Columbia is working in partnership with Aboriginal organizations and communities to create positive relationships and provide a strong, sustainable future for all British Columbians. The New Relationship vision, the Transformative Change Accord and the Métis Nation Relationship Accord demonstrate the significant resolve to close the socio-economic gap between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians.

The New Relationship is a vision for improved government-to-government relations with First Nations founded on respect, reconciliation and recognition of Aboriginal rights and title as cornerstones to strong, forward-looking relationships between the Province and First Nations. This document references new processes and institutions for shared decision making about the land and resources and for revenue and benefit-sharing.

In November 2005, the Province, the Federal Government, the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs, signed the Transformative Change Accord (TCA). The purpose of the accord is to close the social and economic gaps between First Nations and other British Columbians, reconcile Aboriginal rights and title with those of the Crown, and establish a new relationship based upon mutual respect and reconciliation. A set of mutually held principles outlined in the Transformative Change Accord guide a broad range of actions being undertaken to improve relationships and close the gaps.

In May 2006, the Province and the Métis Nation British Columbia signed the Métis Nation Relationship Accord (MNRA). A formalization of the relationship between the Province and the Métis people of British Columbia, the Métis Nation Relationship Accord identifies mutual goals, including collaborative efforts to close the gap in quality of life between Métis people and other British Columbians.

Much remains to be achieved, but progress is being made and the progress is being measured to ensure we continue to move forward together. The report Measuring Outcomes is the companion report to this document and provides a quantitative documentation of measuring progress on closing the socio-economic gaps in Crown – Aboriginal Relationships, Education, Housing and Infrastructure, Health, and Economic opportunities.

This report provides a snapshot of progress made in 2008/09, including plans, programs, achievements, as well as foundational work that has enabled historic or significant changes in relationships, planning, legislation, capacity building and achieving positive outcomes in Aboriginal communities. It also includes stories from people who are experiencing first-hand how programs are providing tangible benefits to their communities.

## Crown-Aboriginal Relationships

Based on the New Relationship and the Transformative Change Accord, the Province and First Nations are developing government-to-government relationships to make B.C. a place where everyone can fully participate in a prosperous economy. Additionally, the Province and Métis Nation B.C. have committed to work together to strengthen relationships and close the gap in the quality of life between Métis people and other British Columbians.

Significant and meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organizations support achieving positive outcomes. This includes meaningful involvement in the development and delivery of policies, programs, services and various initiatives. The Transformative Change Accord acknowledges the importance of First Nations' governance in supporting healthy communities.

The Province, working with individual First Nations and the federal government, is focussed on building opportunities that will provide a better future for all British Columbians. Treaties play a critical role by helping First Nations achieve independence, stable governance structures, social justice, and economic self-reliance. Economic, cultural, environmental, and social benefits for First Nation communities and people are strengthened by recognition of Aboriginal rights through negotiating and implementing final agreements, framework agreements, cut-off claims, protocols, and related agreements and reconciliation efforts.

### 2008/09 Highlights

- The Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement Act received Royal Assent in the Canadian House of Commons.
- The Province and representatives of the Uchucklesaht Tribe, Ucluelet First Nation, Ka:yu:k't'h'-Che:k:tles7et'h' First Nations, and the Toquaht Nation signed the historic Maa-nulth Final Agreement which will create social and economic opportunities for the communities and build certainty and encourage investment for B.C.
- Signed two Incremental Treaty Agreements with the Tla-o-qui-aht and Klahoose First Nations and two Final Agreements (Bilateral Understandings) with In-SHUCK-ch Nation and Yale First Nation. See the Treaty section for more detailed information.
- Settled the final four remaining cut-off claims in British Columbia with Canada, the Seton Lake Indian Band, Gitwangak Band Council, Metlakatla Band and Lax Kw'alaams Indian Band.
- Entered into the Interim Measures Extension Agreement with Nuu-chah-nult Central Region First Nations (Ahousaht First Nation, Hesquiaht First Nation, Toquaht Nation, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, and Ucluelet First Nation) for collaborative management of Clayoquot Sound on Vancouver Island.

*"Although this is not a final treaty, it is one step towards our ultimate goal of self-determination," said Chief Francis Frank, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations. "Our community believes that creating opportunities today will greatly assist our Nation as we plan for the future." - Chief Francis Frank of Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation in regards to the signing of the First Incremental Treaty Agreement (November 13, 2008)*

- Provided \$365,000 for the expansion of the Nanwakolas Clearinghouse pilot project and development of a Strategic Engagement Agreement. This project creates a more coordinated approach to First Nations referrals and consultations related to natural resource applications.
- Supported the Métis Nation BC, through their BC150 Anniversary Celebration Project, to produce a book entitled: "*The Métis in British Columbia - From Fur Trade Outposts to Colony*" and a web-based tool called "Métis in BC Timeline".
- Expanded the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program from 10 interns in 2006 to 25 interns for the 2008/09 year, providing first-hand experience to Aboriginal youth in working within the public service and Aboriginal organizations.
- Implemented year two of the Language and Culture Immersion Program; a program of the First Peoples' Heritage Language and Culture Council, in partnership with the New Relationship Trust and the Province.
- Concluded the highly successful 2008 North American Indigenous Games, one of the largest sporting events on the continent. (See the related profile story in the section on Health).
- Celebrated the official opening of the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay, an internationally-recognized tourism destination, celebrating Haida art, culture and traditions. The Province supported this community project with \$4 million in funding.
- Supported the development of the Skwxwú7mesh Lil'wat7úl (Squamish Lil'wat) Cultural Centre, a world-class venue showcasing Squamish and Lil'wat cultures and providing employment opportunities for over 40 First Nations. The centre officially opened in June of 2008.
- The Province and Taku River Tlingit First Nation signed a framework agreement to work together to create a plan for sustainable use of natural resources in northwestern B.C.
- The Province, Ktunaxa First Nation and the Regional District of East Kootenay signed an engagement protocol to solidify intergovernmental relationships, and to discuss a framework for planning in the Lake Koocausa area.

### **Foundation**

- 2008: Supported Jordan's Principle, which ensures First Nations children receive the health and social services care they need. British Columbia was one of the first provinces in Canada to endorse the principle.
- 2006: Signed the Métis Nation Relationship Accord, agreeing to work with the Métis Nation BC (MNBC) on closing the socio-economic gaps experienced by Métis people. Provide annual operational funding to MNBC for government-to-government dialogue, which is matched by the federal government.
- 2006: *New Relationship Trust Act*. Establishes the New Relationship Trust as a not-for-profit corporation to provide money to assist First Nations to build their own capacity to participate in the processes and activities envisioned by, and that evolve out of, the New Relationship. The New Relationship Trust received \$100 million from the Province for First Nations capacity-building.
- 2006: Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective (UAYC) is established with government support to unify the diverse groups of Aboriginal youth in British Columbia to address issues of common concern.

- 2005: The Province provided significant financial resources to support the Four Host First Nations Society to implement their protocol with VANOC, and the federal government to work with them and other partners to achieve “unprecedented Aboriginal participation” by ensuring that opportunities to participate in the 2010 Winter Games are extended beyond the FHFN to other First Nations, Inuit and Métis people across Canada. The Protocol marks the first time that Indigenous peoples have been recognized as full partners in an Olympic and Paralympic Games by the International Olympic Committee.
- 2005: Signed the Transformative Change Accord, committing to work together to close the social and economic gaps between First Nations and other British Columbians.

#### The Strategy for the Future

The Province and First Nations will continue to work together to foster the fundamentals of the New Relationship and realize this vision for the future.

In 2009/10, the province will continue to build on the recent success of the treaty process and look for opportunities to work with First Nations to better manage consultation requirements through shared decision-making and to support economic opportunities.

The Province will continue to build government-to-government relations. By developing and implementing policy and legislative changes, British

#### Community Perspective: Nanwakolas Clearinghouse

Certainty and efficiency are words that come easily to President Dallas Smith's lips when talking about the Nanwakolas Clearinghouse. "We've not only decreased the piles of paper our First Nations have to deal with, we're able to turn around these consultations within the time frame," explains Dallas.

Before the Clearinghouse was created in 2007 the First Nations in the North Island and adjacent mainland would receive hundreds of application referrals for use of Crown land and resources each year. Each application often needed to be reviewed by three to four different member First Nations. The work load was enormous.

This pilot project creates a single point of access for First Nations referrals related to natural resource applications in the Nanwakolas Council's territories. The current members of the clearinghouse are the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em, Tlowitsis, Da'naxda'xw Awaetlatla, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, Kwiakah, K'ómoks, Kwakiutl, and We Wai Kai First Nations.

The clearinghouse came out of the shared desire by First Nations and the Province to coordinate and improve the efficiency of resource decision making. "This pilot has helped us create a process across the provincial government, breaking down some of the walls between ministries," says Dallas.

The development of the clearinghouse has some clear benefits for the First Nations involved. "This project is building our capacity to have hands on participation in the referral process," Dallas explains. "Beyond capacity building, it's about understanding what's happening in your territory. We can be proactive in the discussion."

The Nanwakolas Clearinghouse has reduced the burden of referrals on First Nations, increased government-to-government communication and supported First Nations decision making and governance capacity.

Dallas is hopeful about the pilot, ""We've built something that can be transferred across the Province." And with \$365,000 from the Province to expand the pilot and continue until the end of 2009, the Nanwakolas Clearinghouse is helping establish a coordinated land and resource consultation structure for the longer term.

<http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/news.html>

Columbia is improving governance over children and family services, culture, health, education and housing for Aboriginal people. The first three years of the New Relationship and Transformative Change Accord have focused on strategic planning and early actions. More and more, First Nations and government will be actively working at the community level to support community priorities, healthy development and growth.

### **Measuring Success**

Although measuring and tracking a relationship presents challenges, success can be measured as more treaties and lasting agreements with First Nations are achieved, and as appreciation, recognition, and respect for Aboriginal cultures grow among all British Columbians. The following methods and indicators track change over time:

- The number of treaties and agreements that build incremental progress towards reconciliation are tracked by the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.
- An annual survey of B.C. residents is conducted to assess public awareness of the diversity of First Nations cultures, as well as awareness of Métis as a distinct Aboriginal population in B.C. The survey also monitors public perception of contributions First Nations and Métis peoples have made to B.C.

## Treaties

In 2008-2009, the Province continued to build upon the success of the Tsawwassen and Maa-nulth Final Agreements by developing an innovative new tool: Incremental Treaty Agreements (ITA). These agreements build trust amongst the parties, create incentives to reach further treaty milestones and increase certainty over land and resources. Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations signed B.C.'s first ITA in November 2008, followed by Klahoose First Nation in March 2009. A number of other First Nations have expressed interest in the potential of ITAs as a means of creating momentum towards a Final Agreement.

Currently there are 106 First Nations engaged at 47 treaty tables, working within the framework of the BC Treaty Commission process.

### **In-SHUCK-ch Final Agreement - Bilateral Understanding**

- March 16, 2009: Signed a bi-lateral agreement between the In-SHUCK-ch Nation (Douglas First Nation, Samahquam Nation and Skatin First Nations) and the Province.
- Formally concludes treaty negotiations between the In-SHUCK-ch Nation and the Province.
- Proposes approximately 14,976 hectares of provincial Crown land and 1,284 hectares of existing reserve lands as part of the Final Agreement. Capital transfer funds will also assist In-SHUCK-ch with business capacity and economic opportunities.
- Provides the opportunity to connect to the BC Hydro grid and to make improvements to forest service roads which will increase economic development for the communities.
- Provides an interim step prior to the Final Agreement being signed by the First Nation, B.C. and Canada.

### **Klahoose First Nation Incremental Treaty Agreement (ITA)**

- March 5, 2009: Klahoose First Nation (Vancouver Island) and the Province sign an ITA, the second in the 2008/09 fiscal year.
- Provides \$2.1 million for the First Nation to purchase Tree Farm Licence 10 and \$150,000 to build economic development capacity.
- Commits Klahoose First Nation to re-engage in the treaty process.

### **Yale First Nation Final Agreement - Bilateral Understanding**

- November 19, 2008: Signed a bi-lateral agreement between Yale First Nation (Fraser Valley) and the Province.
- Sets out an understanding between the First Nation and the Province on the substantive elements of the Final Agreement.
- Negotiation of all substantive issues between Yale First Nation and the Province of British Columbia have been concluded.

- Provides approximately 1,820 hectares of provincial Crown land and former Indian Reserve to be owned in fee simple. This includes ownership of sub-surface resources on or under Yale First Nation land.
- Provides ownership of all forest resources on Yale First Nation land. As a treaty First Nation, the Yale government may make laws respecting forest resources and practices on their land.
- Paves the way for resolution of the outstanding federal issues around fisheries and a specific land claim.
- Provides an interim step prior to the Final Agreement being signed by the First Nation, B.C. and Canada.

#### **Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations Incremental Treaty Agreement (ITA)**

- November 13, 2008: Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations (Vancouver Island) and the Province sign ITA.
- Represents the first ITA to be signed by a First Nation and the Province.
- Commits the Province to transfer five provincial Crown land parcels (totalling approximately 63 hectares) in the District of Tofino, as the parties reach agreed-upon milestones en route to the signing of a Final Agreement. This agreement also provides capacity-building funding totalling \$600,000 to the First Nation upon reaching agreed-upon milestones.

#### **The Strategy for the Future:**

The Province will continue to build on the momentum of recent successes in the treaty process. In concert with First Nations, the Province will continue to use innovative tools, such as ITAs, to negotiate agreements that benefit all British Columbians.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation is working toward finalizing other treaties, with In-SHUCK-ch Nation, Sliammon First Nation, Yale First Nation and Yekooche First Nation all on track to complete final agreements.

#### **Measuring Success**

Treaties and associated agreements help First Nations take major steps on the road to self-determination, recognize Aboriginal rights and title, provide tools for governance, and establish ownership over management of resources in their traditional territory.

While final treaty agreements are the Province's preferred means of reconciling Aboriginal rights and title with the sovereignty of the Crown, other types of agreements can also contribute to reconciliation, for example, Incremental Treaty Agreements that provide beneficial results in the short term which can be built on over time towards final treaties.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation monitors the number of treaties and agreements that build incremental progress towards reconciliation in order to track progress and set goals for treaty and non-treaty process agreements.

## **Education**

Access to quality education and skills training remains one of the key pillars to progress at each stage of a person's development from childhood to adulthood. However, Aboriginal children and youth often face challenges accessing positive learning environments which impact their ability to realise their ambitions as adults. A stimulating, safe and culturally relevant education allows Aboriginal youth to thrive.

The Province is committed to supporting the education and development of Aboriginal students. Since 2005 the provincial government has worked in partnership with Aboriginal organizations and communities to help provide educational opportunities for Aboriginal students at all stages of their development.

### **2008/09 Highlights**

- Supported school districts and Aboriginal communities as they created, signed and implemented additional Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements around the Province, for a total of 47.
- Negotiated a reciprocal tuition agreement, with the First Nations Education Steering Committee to provide tuition for K-12 students living off-reserve who are enrolled in a band school. An amendment to the Independent School Regulation authorized the Province to pay 100% tuition for provincial students attending independent on-reserve schools.
- The Industry Training Authority (ITA) released a comprehensive Aboriginal Trades and Apprenticeship Study. The purpose of this study was to compile information about Aboriginal people in B.C. and their participation in the trades and apprenticeship system. The study provided background information for an ITA Aboriginal trades and apprenticeship strategy with the overall goal of increasing the participation and success of Aboriginal people in the trades.
- The Industry Training Authority (ITA) established the Aboriginal Advisory Council to advise the ITA on its strategy and investments in trades training for Aboriginal people.
- Invested \$583,500 (Labour Market Agreement funding) to increase trades training opportunities for Aboriginal people. 124 Aboriginal people received training through these projects.
- The B.C. Aboriginal Student Award was established in 2008, funded from the returns on a \$10 million endowment fund provided by the Province in 2007 as part of its strategy to improve Aboriginal access and achievement. To ensure more opportunities for students to benefit from this award, the Province provided an additional one-time grant of \$500,000 in 2008. Awards of \$1,000 to \$3,500 are given annually to Aboriginal students pursuing post-secondary education in B.C.
- Success by 6® BC, in collaboration with Métis and First Nations communities, developed the "Connections Box", an interactive cultural resource designed to engage parents and caregivers with Aboriginal children, and a DVD designed for communities to use in meetings and gatherings to inform and raise awareness among Aboriginal leadership regarding the importance of the early years in Aboriginal children's development.
- Provided \$110,000 to bring the Imagination Library, in partnership with Invest in Kids, Dollywood Foundation of Canada, First Nations Education Steering Committee and Métis Nation BC to provide an age-appropriate book each month to children enrolled in the program from birth up to their fifth birthday.

- Worked in partnership with FNESC to develop and implement new courses which reflect Aboriginal knowledge and culture, including English 12 First Peoples (implementation September 2008) and English 10 and 11 First Peoples (implementation planned for September 2010).
- Distributed \$2.98 million to fund 37 Aboriginal projects at British Columbia colleges and universities in 2008-09. The Aboriginal Special Projects Fund provides limited, short-term financial support that assists British Columbia's public post-secondary institutions in developing and delivering culturally-sensitive and quality educational programming and support services for Aboriginal learners.
- Provided \$2 million to help Aboriginal Friendship Centres with family literacy initiatives.
- Launched the revised Bridging Employment Program in January 2009 to deliver services dedicated to Aboriginal women in Duncan, Vancouver Eastside, Burnaby and Prince Rupert to support their independence and employment goals.

#### **Foundation**

- 2007: Implemented the \$65 million Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy to increase access to post-secondary education. This initiative has included important foundational contributions such as:

#### **Community Perspective: Imagination Library**

At six months old Rylan can only listen along as his mother reads to him. The book they are reading, *Kitty Up*, just arrived in their mailbox. That's because Rylan and his family are part of the Imagination Library.

New to B.C., the Imagination Library gives Aboriginal children living in rural and remote communities a book each month from birth to the age of five. The Imagination Library was started in 1996 by international country singer Dolly Parton to increase literacy in her home state of Tennessee. In Rylan's community of Sliammon 44 children currently receive a new addition to their personal library each month.

In addition to Sliammon, up to 30 other rural and remote communities are involved in the program, including Yekooche, Skidegate, Nis'gaa, Penelakut, and Taku River. The Métis Nation is including the program in their education component. By 2010 the Imagination Library is expected to offer over 500 Aboriginal children across B.C. the opportunity to build a personal library in their own home.

Public Health Nurse Shelly Clements is pleased to see the impact the Imagination Library is already having on her community. "When I tell parents about it, tell them we are one of the lucky communities, they are just thrilled. They can't believe there is something like this out there for them."

The Imagination Library is bringing families and communities together. As one mother explains, "These books give me a reason to spend some quiet time with my baby. I know how good it is for me to read to him and he really likes it too."

[www.investinkids.ca/newsroom/the-imagination-](http://www.investinkids.ca/newsroom/the-imagination-)

- Provided more than \$15 million to fund 272 culturally-sensitive Aboriginal projects through the Aboriginal Special Project Fund, which have benefited over 4,700 Aboriginal students since 2001.
  - Distributed \$4.4 million to 11 public post-secondary institutions across the province for the implementation of Year 2 of the Aboriginal Service Plans, partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities.
  - 2007 to 2010: Provided \$15 million in capital funding to 18 public post-secondary institutions to build culturally welcoming structures and gathering places. These gathering places will help to decrease isolation and increase retention for Aboriginal students by reflecting the character, community and traditions of Aboriginal cultures.
- 2006: Signed the First Education Jurisdiction Agreement and enacted legislation to recognize First Nations' jurisdiction over on-reserve schools.

#### **The Strategy for the Future**

First Nations and Métis students will enjoy greater participation and achievement at school through programs and services that facilitate continuous improvement. Aboriginal students will benefit from a core Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum that includes more Aboriginal content, more Aboriginal teachers, and more culturally relevant programs. Continuous improvement is maintained through the support for early childhood care and development, as well as through strong Aboriginal representation in public education.

Scholarships are available to reduce financial barriers and help Aboriginal post-secondary students realize their personal and professional goals. Aboriginal Service Plans at post-secondary institutions set specific goals for participation, tracking educational achievement and success of students from both First Nations and Métis communities.

#### **Measuring Success**

Evidence of success includes using measures determined through dialogue and collaboration with local Aboriginal communities, maintaining continuous improvement, school readiness, scores on tests and in courses related to reading, writing and numeracy, and the rate of post-secondary participation.

Local boards of education and Aboriginal community partners continue to work together, through dialogue and collaboration, to develop and implement Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreements. These agreements help to define what evidence of success looks like and provide ways to improve educational success for Aboriginal youth.

The key indicator of success will be reducing the discrepancy in high school graduation rates by 2015 between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners.

### **Community Perspective: House of Learning**

Going to university can be intimidating: class schedules, giant lecture halls, piles of reading.

But it can be even more isolating for Aboriginal students who moved away from their communities and their culture to attend college or university.

That's why the Province invested \$15 million to build Aboriginal gathering places at public post-secondary institutions around the province. By building Aboriginal students a place where they are welcomed it is expected to help them start, stay and succeed in post-secondary education.

"We are breaking down the barriers that have prevented so many of our Aboriginal people from being all they can be," then Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell said. "At the same time, we're helping our province meet skills shortages by making sure the growing number of young Aboriginal people in B.C. have the knowledge and skills to build great careers."

And at Thompson Rivers University, they are taking it one step farther. The planned TRU House of Learning is not just about building a gathering place, it's also about building on their commitment to be the university of choice for Aboriginal students.

The House of Learning will be a prominent building on campus, reminding students and visitors alike of the importance of First Nations to our province. "The intention is to be a welcoming and inviting place for Aboriginal students and others," explains Nathan Matthews, Director of Aboriginal Education for Thompson Rivers University.

From architectural design to furnishings and art, this multi-purpose facility will be inspired by the culture and art of First Nations. For example, the auditorium will reflect the design of an Interior Salish winter home. The building will also feature an education centre, programming offices and lounge space.

One of many gathering places being constructed at post-secondary institutions around the province, Thompson Rivers University's House of Learning is meant to do more than inspire Aboriginal students. It will also be a place to facilitate communications and networking for Aboriginal programming and be a site for conferences.

Nathan believes the House of Learning will be a focal point for building better relationships. "It will be a place where we can create better understanding."

<http://www.tru.ca/houseoflearning.html>

## Housing and Infrastructure

Housing and infrastructure are basic needs that create opportunities in the lives of all British Columbians. Since 2001 the core housing needs of Aboriginal people has decreased by 6 per cent.

However, a disproportionate number of Aboriginal families and individuals in British Columbia are still in need of housing. 22.3 per cent of Aboriginal people living off-reserve live in inadequate housing, or in places that are too expensive and generate financial pressures. Approximately one in three homeless people are of Aboriginal descent.

Through the 2006 Housing Strategy: Housing Matters BC the Province worked with its First Nations, Métis and urban Aboriginal partners to address Aboriginal housing needs.

### 2008/09 Highlights

- In May 2008, the Province, the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and Canada signed a historic tripartite memorandum of understanding to develop a comprehensive approach to improve housing for First Nations communities, individuals and families on and off reserve.
- Working with Aboriginal Housing Management Association to build its capacity to assume responsibility for social housing units. The Aboriginal Housing Management Association is the first and only Aboriginal social housing management agency in Canada.
- More than 4,000 new and upgraded supportive housing units and shelter beds are being created through the Provincial Homelessness initiative, which will benefit many homeless Aboriginal people.
- Provided \$30 million to help bridge the digital divide for British Columbia First Nations living in remote communities. As of the end of 2008/2009, 38 more First Nation communities have access to high-speed internet for a total of 123 First Nations.

### Foundation

- 2008: Launched the Aboriginal Homeless Outreach Program providing \$500,000 annually to Aboriginal non-profit organizations in nine communities across British Columbia to connect homeless people to housing, income assistance and support services in their communities within an Aboriginal context.
- 2008: Undertook a province-wide engagement process involving over 250 people from Aboriginal organizations, First Nations and other groups to inform and guide future work related to off-reserve Aboriginal housing. The summary report was released in March 2008.
- 2007: Through the Aboriginal Housing Initiative, the Province has committed \$50.9 million to build 200 new units of affordable off-reserve Aboriginal housing, which is creating safe, secure and culturally appropriate housing in 10 communities for youth, women, elders and those struggling with addictions.
- 2007: Provided funding for Elders' Lodges – assisted living homes for Aboriginal Elders.
- 2006: Completed an on- and off-reserve housing needs and capacity assessment review. In addition to a literature and statistical review, Aboriginal communities and organizations around British Columbia provided information. This input is now guiding development of safe, affordable and culturally appropriate housing to British Columbia's Aboriginal people living off-reserve.

### **Community Perspective: T'Souke Nation Goes Solar**

The west coast of Vancouver Island may not spring to mind when you think sunshine, but that hasn't stopped T'Souke First Nation from launching an innovative project to become B.C.'s first solar community.

"For most of our history, First Nations were rooted in the traditions of sustainable living and respect for the land," says T'Souke Chief Gordon Planes, "and the Sum-SHA-Thut project is the first step in achieving energy self-sufficiency once again."

The Sum-SHA-Thut project, the Sencoten term for "sunshine", was identified early on as a priority project during the community's planning session. With the help of \$400,000 in funding from the Province, T'Souke was able to turn their vision into reality. "This was a chance to get everyone working together on a project everyone is excited about," explained one T'Souke elder. "It just really united the community and generates a sense of pride."

Everyone in T'Souke First Nation has had input in this wide ranging project. Activities included retrofitting houses to be more energy efficient, a demonstration of three solar technology models, solar hot water and training of solar technicians from the community. The result is that the project is six times larger than any other solar installation of its kind in B.C.

As project manager Andrew explains, going solar is part of T'Souke's goal to increase economic activity. "We hope this will lead to economic development, we have plans to form our own company. We're not just doing solar, we're looking at wind and tidal energy as well."

And T'Souke isn't keeping this knowledge for themselves either. "It's a tradition that you give your first project away," says Andrew. "If you are making a mask or a paddle you give it away, so we've agreed that we will make this information available. They are sponsoring a Solar Gathering this summer for First Nations and other communities to learn about the effectiveness of the technology and financing."

Their vision is to help First Nations communities currently reliant on fossil fuel for power to make the move to solar. With the high and rising cost of diesel, solar energy is quickly becoming a viable option for off-grid First Nation communities.

Going solar has galvanized the community, provided economic opportunities and made T'Souke an alternative energy leader in B.C. As a solar community they are helping to shape a brighter, greener future for British Columbia.

### **The Strategy for the Future**

The Province is committed to working with Aboriginal groups, First Nations and the federal government to develop innovative approaches to housing for B.C.'s Aboriginal population.

The information gathered through the province-wide engagement process will be used to guide future work in developing ways to provide safe, affordable and culturally appropriate housing to British

Columbia's Aboriginal people living off-reserve. This includes building capacity among Aboriginal partners to manage and develop housing – part of an overall commitment by government to support capacity-building in local Aboriginal communities.

By working together, First Nations Technology Council, All Nations Trust Company, the First Nations Health Council, the provincial and federal governments, and other partners, internet connectivity will be brought to communities throughout British Columbia.

### **Measuring Success**

Since 2001 the core housing needs of Aboriginal people in B.C. has decreased by 6 per cent. While some progress is being made, the gap between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians remains significant.

Adequate and affordable housing is the foundation for improving the health, education, employment and well-being of Aboriginal people. Safe, affordable housing for Aboriginal people will provide for stronger and more vibrant Aboriginal communities throughout British Columbia.

Performance indicators include measuring the number of new housing units off-reserve, water safety, broadband connectivity, and transferring the administration of social housing units to the Aboriginal Housing Management Association.

## Health

Aboriginal British Columbians do not enjoy the same health status as the rest of the province's population. Aboriginal people face serious health challenges: lower life expectancy, higher rates of suicide, diabetes, heart disease, and addictions. The provincial government, working with the First Nations Health Council, Métis Nation BC, and Aboriginal organizations, is committed to improving health outcomes and eliminating the gap in health status between Aboriginal British Columbians and the rest of the population.

Using an integrated approach to health and community programs provides the support B.C.'s Aboriginal people need to build healthier lifestyles.

### 2008/09 Highlights

- In March 2009, the Recognition and Reconciliation Protocol on First Nations Children, Youth and Families was signed between the Province and the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit and Union of BC Indian Chiefs committing the parties to an inclusive process to establish a common vision for First Nations child and family wellness in B.C., in addition to other commitments laid out in the protocol.
- In 2008, the First Nations Health Council sponsored a First Nations Health Directors' Forum to provide health directors the opportunity to strategize, network and provide input into a BC First Nation Health Directors Association.
- ActNow provided \$600,000 to 33 Métis Chartered Communities throughout the province over two years to support health promotion, and increase community, family and individual health and wellness.
- Provided \$1.4 million for the Honour Your Health Challenge supporting Aboriginal leaders to establish and lead healthy living initiatives in their communities.
- Provided \$3 million in funding and land for Stehiyáq Healing and Wellness Village, to be operated by the Ch-ihl-kway-uhk Tribe Society.
- Launched Aboriginal InTraining Program with SportsMed BC for Aboriginal

### Community Perspective: 2008 North American Indigenous Games

The success of the 2008 North American Indigenous Games hosted by the Cowichan Tribes has shone the spotlight on the calibre of Aboriginal athletes in B.C.

At the opening ceremonies the air sizzled with more than heat as a parade of drummers, spiritual leaders and over 4,500 young Aboriginal athletes entered the Si'em Le'lum Field. Aboriginal Team B.C. led the way to enthusiastic cheers from over 20,000 spectators.

Team B.C. is made up of 71 coaches, 15 mission staff and 324 Aboriginal youth athletes who have excelled in their sport, like Donna Head B.C.'s first gold medallist at the games in high jump. She also took home a bronze for the 400m sprint. In total, Aboriginal Team BC won 113 medals.

The Games showcase Aboriginal excellence in sport, and share North American indigenous culture. The Games included the arrival of Tribal Journeys 106 ocean canoes, the raising of the Cowichan Spirit Pole and a cultural village featuring a concert series, a film festival and an artists' market consisting of 100 booths. An elders' meeting was also held during the games with a focus on Aboriginal youth health.

The North American Indigenous Games have increased the profile of Aboriginal sport, encouraged B.C.'s Aboriginal youth to adopt a healthy lifestyle and exposed participants to cultures from across the continent.

participants to walk/run in the Vancouver SunRun.

- Created Wired for Fitness, a 30-minute film featuring Aboriginal athletes as they prepare for, and compete in, the 2008 North American Indigenous Games.
- Delivered breast health information to 42 First Nations communities through the Tour for the Cure.
- The B.C. government has provided \$2 million towards the Aboriginal Nursing Strategy.

### **Foundation**

- 2007: Signed the historic Tripartite First Nations Health Plan between the Province, Canada, the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and Union of BC Indian Chiefs.
- 2007: Appointed the Province's first Aboriginal Health Physician Advisor, Dr. Evan Adams. The Aboriginal Health Physician Advisor is responsible for monitoring, tracking progress and reporting on the health of Aboriginal people in British Columbia.
- 2007: Established the First Nations Health Advisory Committee, part of a new governance structure created to ensure that First Nations have input into decisions affecting their health. The committee involves First Nations, Ministry of Health, health authorities and Health Canada in collaborative decision-making at the highest strategic health planning level.
- 2002: Increasing the number of Aboriginal nurses in B.C. is a priority for the B.C. government. The aims of the Aboriginal Nursing Strategy are to: encourage Aboriginal youth to enter nursing careers, support the recruitment and retention of nurses of Aboriginal heritage, and increase the number of Aboriginal communities in B.C. with quality nursing services.

### **The Strategy for the Future**

The provincial government, partnering with the First Nations Health Council, the federal government, and the Métis Nation BC will continue to take action to improve Aboriginal health outcomes by improving the delivery of health services and promoting prevention measures.

The provincial government, together with the federal government and the First Nations Health Council, are implementing the 29 actions of the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan. One of these action items in particular is the work to build a First Nations health governing body that would take over the administrative role of the Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch in British Columbia.

The purpose of creating this First Nations health governing body would be to enhance First Nations involvement in the delivery of health services, and promote better integration and coordination of federally and provincially funded health services.

Other action items from the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan are also underway including the creation of a cultural competency training program for health care providers to give them greater cultural understanding to better meet the needs of Aboriginal people.

### **Measuring Success**

To track progress on closing the gap in health outcomes, the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan identifies seven performance indicators: life expectancy at birth; mortality rates; youth suicide rates;

infant mortality rates; prevalence of diabetes; childhood obesity; and practising, certified First Nations health care professionals. Other key indicators include the measurement of new and improved health governance, management, and service delivery relationships at all levels.

Disease prevention, chronic disease management, improved lifestyle choices, education, culturally sensitive programs, access to better and more timely services, increased support for addictions and other mental health issues, all support better health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

However, better health services and prevention programs are only one piece in closing the health gap. Increased education, higher income and better housing are a few of the critical areas which need to improve as we work towards our goal of closing the health gap.

### **Community Perspective: Honour Your Health Challenge, Evangeline Maitland**

"Like in any dream or goal you set for yourself, you feel the fear, face the doubt and feel the pain. But, just follow your heart and get it done."

That was the motivational mantra Evangeline Maitland from the Gitxsan Nation kept repeating to herself when she took the first steps towards changing her life.

Evangeline Maitland - a young wife, mother, daughter, teacher, and Gitxsan Nation community member - was watching her health deteriorate and she knew her weight and lifestyle were mostly to blame. So, when Evie found out about the 'Honour Your Health Challenge,' it was exactly what she needed to turn her life around and also sparked in her a passion for something she never thought possible.

The Honour Your Health Challenge (HYHC) is a hugely successful, provincially-coordinated health challenge that encourages and supports individuals and communities to quit or reduce their tobacco misuse. The HYHC also promotes smoke-free environments and healthy lifestyles through physical activity, healthy eating and healthy choices in pregnancy.

A disproportionate number of Aboriginal people have health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. But because these diseases can be prevented through improved nutrition and physical activity, the HYHC partnered with SportMedBC to develop an Aboriginal-specific InTraining program to help Aboriginal people improve their health and fitness. The comprehensive training program also helps participants train for the 10 km Vancouver Sun Run.

Evie first signed up for the InTraining program in January 2008 and it wasn't long before she became a dedicated runner. It was an emotional time that April as she and more than 800 other Aboriginal participants crossed the finish line as part of the HYHC Sun Run Corporate Team. The Challenge keeps growing every year; approximately 7,500 people joined Evie in the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Challenge and 1,400 entered in the Vancouver Sun Run component.

The Honour Your Health Challenge was a turning point for Evie in changing her lifestyle and helping make her community healthier as a whole. She still runs and strength trains several times a week, regularly enters 10 km races, and leads a very active lifestyle overall. She has lost close to 50 pounds and has never felt better.

Evie's whole outlook on life has now changed. She believes if people are determined, have a proper vision and a positive mindset, they can accomplish anything they want. And that includes taking control of their own health.

## Economic Opportunities

The provincial government continues to work with Aboriginal organizations and communities to ensure that economic opportunities are available to create a prosperous future for Aboriginal people across the province.

Land use agreements with First Nations clarify government-to-government relationships, provide certainty of access to economic resources and create economic opportunities, protect environmental values, and respect traditional values, resources and land interests.

### 2008/09 Highlights

- Signed wildlife, parks, Crown land, and final agreements with the Blueberry River First Nations and an economic benefit agreement with several Treaty 8 First Nations (Doig River, Prophet River, West Moberly, and Fort Nelson), all of which have provided \$30 million in benefits as of 2008/09.
- Provided \$500,000 to support collaborative land-use planning and government-to-government relations in the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area, a key region for sustainable economic development for northern British Columbia.
- The Journey to Economic Independence Report resulted in pilot projects in the communities of Ahousaht, Beecher Bay Band, and the Halalt First Nation to test out best practices and lessons learned in First Nations economic development.
- Province and the Lil'wat Nation signed a historic land-use agreement that encompasses just under 800,000 hectares. The agreement builds on two years of work and completes the second and final phase of the Sea-to-Sky Land and Resource Management Plan.
- Nine new conservancies were established on Haida Gwaii, helping to reconcile B.C.'s land-use policies with the Haida Nation. The nine new conservancies and two additions total 111,054 hectares.

### Community Perspective: Canoe Creek, Stswecem'c Xgat'tem Development Limited Partnership

Nestled in the vastness of the Cariboo Chilcotin grasslands is the Canoe Creek First Nation. The valleys and watersheds that surround the two communities of Canoe Creek and Dog Creek are an important part of the ecological and cultural landscape.

The Stswecem'c Xgat'tem Development Limited Partnership, Canoe Creek's economic development group, is working hard to restore their local ecosystem. Through the Job Opportunities Program established work crews are building stock trails to move cattle in and around Alberta Lake and away from grasslands, riparian areas and endangered species habitat.

"The Job Opportunities Program has been a good fit, providing incomes and helping us work towards our ecosystem conservation and recovery goals," explains Mike McDonough, Stswecem'c Xgat'tem project manager.

Stswecem'c Xgat'tem Development Limited Partnership has invested in training and equipment, providing skilled jobs for band members. "We now have a substantial workforce," says Mike. "The work crew has all their own equipment and trucks. They're really moving forward to run their own work operations."

Restoring the grasslands is supporting their local eco-system. Restoring the grasslands is building pride in Canoe Creek First Nation's traditional territory. Restoring the grasslands is helping the community prosper.

- Forests For Tomorrow program provided opportunities for First Nation contractors to improve long term timber supply through the re-establishment of young forests on large areas that have been burned by wildfire or affected by the mountain pine beetle. The program allocated \$4.2 million to First Nations employment and business opportunities, as well as supported several local First Nations Capacity Building Initiatives.
- Provided \$500,000 to be used in conjunction with other funding to set up an economic development office, the Misty Isles Economic Development Society, on Haida Gwaii.
- The Province met its commitment to establish an Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) system for coastal B.C. by March 31, 2009. Working with First Nations partners as well as industry, environmental and community leaders, a holistic approach to managing human activities and protecting biodiversity has been achieved.
- Announced revenue-sharing with First Nations on new mining projects. B.C. is the first province in Canada to share direct revenue generated from mining projects. The process will ensure that First Nations receive revenue throughout the life of mining projects.
- Tripled the availability of the Aboriginal Business and Entrepreneurship Skills Training (BEST) program from six to 18 communities. The expansion will bolster Aboriginal business development, provide increased economic opportunities and encourage the retention of skills and experience within Aboriginal communities.
- Hosted the inaugural B.C. Aboriginal Business Awards in partnership with the BC Achievement Foundation to recognize outstanding business achievement across the province and showcase and encourage budding Aboriginal entrepreneurs.
- Negotiated Crown land revenue sharing agreements with First Nations to share revenue from major resort proposals.
- Established the First Nations Resort Development Initiative, which encourages First Nations to identify Crown land sites they believe are suitable for resort development, and wish to develop as an economic opportunity for their community.
- Provided \$1 million over five years to the Nisga'a Nation to improve economic opportunities and create jobs in the Nass Valley. The funding will be provided in instalments of \$200,000 until 2012.

### **Foundation**

- 2007: Contributed \$30 million to the Coast Opportunity Funds directed toward economic development opportunities for First Nations businesses involved in activities including sustainable fisheries, forestry and tourism along the central and north coast.
- 2007: WorkBC was launched as an innovative new labour market strategy to ensure the Province's success in meeting key economic priorities and advancing B.C.'s global economic competitiveness. One of the goals of WorkBC is to increase Aboriginal participation and labour market success.
- 2006: The historic Coast Land Use Decisions for the North Coast and Central Coast protect vast areas of temperate rain forest, while providing a unique framework called Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) for the industry to work in. These protected areas preserve some of the largest intact temperate rainforests in the world and serve to balance the needs of the environment with the need

for sustainable jobs and a strong economic future for coastal communities. Over 20 First Nations have signed Strategic Land Use Planning agreements for the Central and North Coast.

- 2006: First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) Initiative: \$8.9 million transferred to the First Nations Forestry Council to address First Nations needs with respect to the Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic. Completed Phase I and II MPB Impact Assessment and response, and created communication tools for impacted First Nations communities.
- 2005: Provided \$5 million to Aboriginal Tourism BC toward a provincial Aboriginal cultural tourism strategy. The strategy will support a strong and sustainable Aboriginal cultural tourism industry for B.C.
- Completed 132 Aboriginal Forest and Range Opportunity Agreements with 153 First Nations, providing approximately \$243.1 million in revenue sharing to First Nation communities and 44.5 million cubic metres when issued within a variety of forest tenures.

#### The Strategy for the Future

The Province will support the BC First Nations Economic Development Action Plan to build self-reliance, prosperity and economic stability in First Nations communities. Business

#### Community Perspective: New Conservancies on Haida Gwaii

The Haida Nation's Strategic Land Use Manager, Bill Beldessi proudly looks over a map of Haida Gwaii, "Over 50 per cent of Haida Gwaii is now protected."

Over the years, the Haida people had identified several areas of cultural significance which were designated by the Council of the Haida Nation as "protected areas". There is now a resolve to respect the continuing cultural and societal needs of Haida people.

In a new climate of cooperation, 11 new conservancies have been designated by the Province. These conservancies coincide with those previously designated by the Haida Nation as "Protected Areas".

"This goes a long way towards reconciling B.C.'s land-use policies with those of the Haida Nation," said Guujaaw, President of the Haida Nation. "Our people have long protected these areas because of their natural, cultural, and spiritual values. Now, with the provincial government, we have collaborated to build a more stable platform upon which we design a sustainable future for Haida Gwaii."

The Strategic Land Use Agreement planning team, led by Bill, is now developing management plans for the 111,054 newly protected hectares and integrating them with other plans around ocean resources. These plans will ensure the Haida maintain access the land as well as provide opportunities for future generations.

"It's taken a lot of good hard work by a lot of good people, over generations," explains Bill. Five, out of the seven full-time team members are Haida. Team member Soni Rice is passionate about preserving the land and has worked many years to make these conservancies a reality.

The work included a four-year land use planning process with multi-stakeholder groups, community planning forums and consultation packages. With the community whole-heartedly supporting the protection of Haida Gwaii, Bill and his team had a clear mandate. Land use was important to the community because some of the areas are popular sites for camping, hunting and fishing.

Bill looks up from the map and out his window. "The real work is just beginning," said Bill, "We all look forward to implementing the plan and have every reason to be optimistic." The 11 new conservancies are a stable platform for the Haida to design a sustainable future.

arrangements and economic opportunities between First Nations, the province, and the private sector will be encouraged.

Métis Nation BC will develop and implement a framework for Economic Development to create economic opportunities for the Métis Nation, Métis communities and Métis owned businesses.

Access to education and skills training and development through initiatives such as youth entrepreneurship training and mobile training facilities for trades will help young people enter the construction and trades industries, and develop skills. The Province will increase the number of Aboriginal apprentices and trainees in trades by implementing the Aboriginal Trades Strategy.

Through the Four Host Nations Secretariat, the Province will facilitate the participation and inclusion of First Nations in economic opportunities leading up to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, showcasing British Columbia's unique Aboriginal cultures and history to the world.

The Province will work to enhance government's engagements with First Nations when Crown land and resource decisions affect First Nations traditional territories. This includes funding to assist with the costs of First Nations consultation obligations on major project environmental assessments and to ensure the Crown's obligation to consult is met, while providing opportunities to partner with First Nations in many large and small economic development projects. Aboriginal heritage and cultural links to the landscape will be respected in future land use planning processes.

Agencies are delivering on approved government strategy for Strategic Engagement and Economic and Community Development Agreements. These agreements will improve investment climate in B.C., strengthen relationships with First Nations and support progress on TCA goals.

#### **Measuring success:**

Key performance indicators include reducing unemployment among Aboriginal people, increasing the number of Aboriginal entrepreneurs, and increasing employment income.

### **Community Perspective: B.C. Aboriginal Business Awards**

Over four hundred guests attended the inaugural B.C. Aboriginal Business gala in Vancouver on January 27, 2009. In total, 21 businesses were honoured for their leadership and entrepreneurial spirit in British Columbia's business community. The award recipients highlighted the strength of Aboriginal business talent.

#### **Ellen Melcosky, Outstanding Business Achiever**

2008 was a momentous year for small business owner Ellen Melcosky as her gourmet smoked salmon business Little Miss Chief was recognized with several prestigious awards including Outstanding Business Achiever at the inaugural Aboriginal Business Awards.

Ellen, a member of the Esketemc (Alkali) who calls Westbank First Nation her home, started Little Miss Chief right in her own backyard. "The kids were grown up and I started feeling like I'd love to go back to work again. Friends said you have all those smokers in your backyard, why don't you start your own business?" Ellen says.

That was fourteen years ago. Today what had once been a passion for living off the land and following the traditions of her mother and grandmother is now an internationally sought-after delicacy. Her smoked salmon is available in grocery stores, delicatessens, specialty food stores throughout Canada, the United States, the Netherlands, and Spain. The product's beautiful presentation and unique flavour make it a favourite host gift in Canadian Embassies.

The company has grown from one woman experimenting in her backyard in 1996 to outsourcing the smoking of salmon to a Federally Registered Production Facility on Vancouver Island. Ellen is confident that her company will continue to grow, predicting product exports to rise to 50 per cent.

Although it's been a lot of work, Ellen has enjoyed every minute of it. "'I really enjoyed doing it, that's what it's all about – finding something you love to do and turning it into a success."

<http://www.littlemisschief.com/>

#### **Jacob Beaton, Young Male Aboriginal Entrepreneur of the Year**

Jacob Beaton, owner of CopperMoon Communications, believes that his Aboriginal heritage gives him a leg up in his industry. "First Nations have a fair bit to build on as a culture that focuses on nurturing and raising people who are really strong in their gifts."

That's certainly what he's done with CopperMoon. With a team of nine talented Aboriginal professionals such as Thompson Rivers University journalist grad Juli Holloway, it's an Aboriginal company for Aboriginal people. As Jacob explains, "It's most effective to have people who understand the business doing it. We understand the market really well. You don't have to explain what First Nations culture is about to us."

Jacob's team provides a wide range of communications services, from public relations and strategic planning to graphic and web design. CooperMoon also provides training tailored to Aboriginal organizations and First Nations governments.

And Jacob's not interested in cornering this market. "We need more First Nations people in the communications industry," he says. "There's a lot of opportunity in First Nations communities around B.C. right now, and they are just starting to look at their communication needs."

Building his own business has been rewarding, but it's taken a lot of hard work. "'I highly encourage people who are considering it, to do it. There's an incredibly steep learning curve, but I've gotten to work with other amazing Aboriginal people.'" Considering the 100 per cent satisfaction rating CopperMoon has, it looks like his clients appreciate his cultural approach to communications too.

<http://www.coppermoon.ca/home>

## **Conclusion**

B.C.'s commitment to closing the gaps between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians is stronger than ever. Since 2005 the principles entrenched in the New Relationship, the Transformative Change Accord and the Métis Nation Relationship Accord have provided real opportunities for Aboriginal communities and individuals in all parts of the province.

Aboriginal organizations, communities and individuals are working in partnership with each other and with all levels of government to close the socio-economic gaps that have existed for far too long. Treaties provide the governance tools which allow First Nation communities to become self reliant and to take control of their own future. The Province will continue working to achieve progress to increase access to economic opportunities, improve health outcomes, and address the housing needs of Aboriginal people in British Columbia.

Education is a cornerstone for future prosperity for all British Columbians, and particularly for Aboriginal youth. Investment in training is the key to ensuring that Aboriginal youth are given the opportunities and the skills they require to achieve their full potential. Improved social and economic conditions are the foundation on which individual families and communities can thrive.

Aboriginal culture and heritage is an essential part of community identity. Respect for traditions and history enriches the lives of all British Columbians and helps to preserve language, culture and a sense of Aboriginal identity for future generations.

The Province of British Columbia is proud of the progress that has been made since 2005 and honours the vision and commitment of First Nations and Métis leaders in all corners of B.C. They are building a brighter future for their communities and for all British Columbia.

To learn about the Province's New Relationship with First Nations and Aboriginal people visit  
[www.newrelationship.gov.bc.ca](http://www.newrelationship.gov.bc.ca)

To read Measuring Outcomes, the annual report tracking social and economic outcomes of Aboriginal people in British Columbia visit [http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/newrelationship/down/measuring\\_outcomes.pdf](http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/newrelationship/down/measuring_outcomes.pdf)

To find out more about the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation visit [www.gov.bc.ca/arr](http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr)